

A stylized landscape with mountains and a large sun. The scene is rendered in a soft, painterly style. In the foreground, there are jagged, rocky peaks in shades of yellow and orange. In the middle ground, there are more mountains in shades of red and purple. In the background, there are blue mountains under a large, bright yellow sun. A single tree stands on a peak in the middle ground. The overall atmosphere is warm and dramatic.

Adventures in Ventorros

Part 1

by Kiera

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The Reece and Giorgia Adventures

<https://www.storiesspace.com/stories/adventure/adventures-in-ventorros-part-1.aspx>

"RUUUUUUUUNNNNN, GIORGIA!" Reece yells at the top of his voice as a giant foot descends upon his sister and Sprite the black cat clinging to her for dear life, at least, he thinks it is Sprite, according to Giorgia every cat so far has been her. It is all very confusing. Giorgia looks up, as the shadow of a giant foot blocks out the sun, she could barely see. Her heart pounding, she hears her brother yelling, and Sprite hissing and scratching wanting to attack, but she couldn't let her go, she'd get squashed, it looks likely that they both would be any second now! She wonders how on Earth she would get out of this alive, or without punishment. Mum told them both to stay put and stay out of trouble. It was all Reece's fault, or that's what she was going to tell Mum, no way was she going to admit it was her idea to sneak past the Giant, she'd lose all her euros. She needed a miracle.... Two days earlier. "Mum, Reece banged his suitcase into mine," Giorgia whines as they make their way towards the exit at Malaga Airport. Kiera looks to the heavens and prays for patience. Over Three hours on a Ryan Air flight from Stanstead of non-stop "Mum, Giorgia just poked me" "Mum, Reece touched my kindle." You name it, it happened, and she was sick of hearing the word 'Mum.' Uncle Phill was going to spend two minutes with her kids and send them all packing back to England at this rate. "Will you both just knock it off?" She says for the thousandth time. "Uncle Phill is just past that door, and he's going to walk straight back out of it without us if you two don't start behaving yourselves, what happened to 'We promise to be on our best behaviour, Mum'?" "What happened to the ten euros you promised us if we behaved?" Giorgia asks. "You haven't earned it yet." "That's because you haven't paid for the privilege yet" Reece pipes in. Turning her head, so the kids don't see her grinning Kiera takes out her purse. "I'll give you both five now and the other five midweek. If you keep it up until the end of the week you each get another five. Do we have a deal?" she says holding out the money. "Sounds good to me," Reece says holding out his hand. "Fine," says Giorgia doing the same. "OK then, let's do this. I would like to get invited back again, so any bad behaviour from here on loses a euro." "WHAT! That's not fair." "A deal's a deal; you can't back out now. Now let's go find the man in the blue hat." As they wander through the exit, they hear a man yell. "Precious, over here." They all turn to see Uncle Phill heading towards them wearing his trademark blue hat and a big grin. Kiera hadn't seen her Uncle since her Dad's funeral over ten years ago; he looks so much like him she felt her eyes fill with tears. "UNCLE PHILL, UNCLE PHILL" Reece and Giorgia go tearing past her and straight into their Uncle's arms. Smiling she walks over, hoping that the kids keep their word and behave. "It's good to see you, Precious" Uncle Phill says, disentangling himself from the kids and wrapping her in a tight hug. His pet name for her, despite being a bit LOTR makes her grin and she

hugs him back just as tightly. "It's good to see you too, Thank you for inviting us. I see you've already met the kids." "They're adorable." Kiera snorts "You wouldn't have said that ten minutes ago." Reece and Giorgia smile up at him like butter wouldn't melt, he looks at them and to Kiera and frowns in confusion. "Car's this way, Precious, shall we go?" he says holding his hand out for her suitcase. "Lead the way," she says handing it over. Forty-Five minutes later. "Yep, it's definitely on this level," Uncle Phill says with confidence. "You said that about level one, two and three" Giorgia moans. "And four" Reece pipes in helpfully while Kiera covers her mouth to stop herself from laughing. "Ah Ha, there it is, see I told you it was here" Uncle Phill points towards a big blue Nissan 4X4. Twenty minutes later Kiera lowers herself further into her seat to hide from the honking horns of the angry drivers in the cars queued up behind them at the exit they are blocking as Uncle Phill finally jumps back into the car. "Tickets paid for, Precious," he says, utterly oblivious to the build-up of traffic behind them or the angry glares from those who'd paid for their tickets before trying to leave. "Do you want to stop for coffee on the way? It's a few hours drive" he asks as he inserts his ticket and drives out of the airport. "Sounds good," She replies finally feeling safe to sit up now that they are away from the angry drivers. An hour later they find themselves sitting outside a restaurant. Kiera is drinking a much-needed coffee almost choking to death listening to Uncle Phill's fish puns. "We're going to have a Whale of a time," Uncle Phill tells the children who once again burst out laughing. So does Kiera. "Oh, my Cod you're so funny!" Reece laughs, making everyone laugh harder. A small white kitten with big blue eyes jumps onto Giorgia's lap and starts purring as she strokes it, she falls instantly in love. Reece leans over to pet her, and she hisses. "Mum, can I keep her?" "You can't keep her, Giorgia" Uncle Phill says, and the kitten hisses at him too. "She's wild; the Spanish don't treat their animals the same as we do that's why she keeps hissing, besides, we have to go." "Her name's Sprite, and she's only hissing because she doesn't like boys, try and stroke her, mum" Kiera does, and the kitten purrs. "You can't keep her, Giorgia put her down now, we have to go," Kiera tells her. Giorgia whispers in the kitten's ear, and the kitten jumps down and runs off. "What did you say to her?" Reece asks as they all head towards the car. Giorgia smirks and taps her nose as she climbs into the car. "Fine, I didn't want to know anyway" Reece mumbles as he puts on his seatbelt and the car drives off. Kiera noticed Uncle Phill had started to sneeze as she took in the views of the Sierra Nevada mountains and listened to the conversation that was bizarrely switching between fish puns and snails. Achoooo "You know a snail knocked on my door once; it was about six years ago now," Uncle Phill tells the kids as he blows his nose and sneezes again. The kids lean forward. "How did the snail knock?" Reece asks in disbelief. Achooo "I didn't stop to ask, I picked that snail up, and I threw him as far as I could, right to the end of my garden" Achoo, he tells them. "How far did he go?" Reece asks "The poor snail did he break his shell?" Giorgia asks, concerned. Uncle Phill blows his nose again and tells them " Not far enough, and I don't think so Giorgia because you know what? Four years later, I hear a knock on my door. When I open it, it's that exact same snail." "Oh, My Cod," Giorgia cries. "No way!" Reece laughs " How do you know it was the same snail?" Sneezing again, Uncle Phill tells them " Because when I looked down the snail said 'What did you do that for?'" The kids howl with laughter, and the drive continues, Kiera's not sure who is having more fun, the children or her Uncle in between

sneezing. She sure hopes he isn't catching a cold. The following morning an exhausted Kiera sips her tea with Reece and Giorgia beside her who are equally as tired. As they watch the sun rise above the mountains, she yawns and wishes her Uncle hadn't warned the kids at bedtime not to worry if they saw Gecko's running along the bedroom walls. Hence the lack of sleep. A small tabby cat runs up the path and jumps onto Giorgia's lap. "Sprite, you found me, you're such a clever girl" Giorgia coos. "How dumb are you? That cat's completely different, and bigger" Reece tells her. The cat hisses at him. "Reece, don't call your sister dumb, that's a euro," Kiera tells him sternly. "But" "Don't make me make it two." Reece wisely zips his lips and glares at Giorgia as she smirks and strokes the now purring tabby kitten that can't possibly be Sprite. Except, that hiss sure sounded familiar. "Morning kids, Morning, Precious" Uncle Phill says as he strolls out the door scratching his arm. "Got one of those going spare?" He points at Kiera's cup then scratches his head. "Sure, I was just going to get another, do you take sugar?" Kiera asks as she gets up and heads inside. "Just one please, Precious," He says and starts scratching the back of his neck. "Are you alright?" Kiera asks, noticing a slight rash on his arm. "I'm fine, why do you ask?" Uncle Phill says defensively not quite meeting her eyes. Kiera shakes her head and wanders inside. First, the sneezing, now the itching something didn't seem right but then again; she was super tired, so she put it out of her mind. Uncle Phill had rented them a beautiful farmhouse with a pool higher up in the mountains. They spent the day sunbathing and swimming, but she couldn't help noticing her Uncle's constant itching, the rash was spreading despite him trying to cover it up with a t-shirt. Whenever she asked him about it, he would keep saying nothing was wrong. It was all very odd. A few of her Uncle's friends were coming for dinner, so Kiera was cooking a curry. As she stirred the sauce, her Uncle wandered in, she could hear the children outside laughing, they loved him to bits, that was obvious from the start. "Smells good, Precious." Uncle Phill says inhaling deeply. "It's been a long time since I had a decent ruby" he adds. Smiling Kiera turned and was his eye twitching? It was twitching. "Uncle Phill, what's wrong with your eye?" "Nothing, nothing at all, I think a bug flew in it," he says as he slaps his hand over the offending eye which is when she notices the uncovered eye, also twitching. "And the other eye is also a bug, I assume?" she enquires suspiciously, narrowing her eyes. "Oh, my Cod, the curry is burning" Uncle Phill yells as he slaps his other hand over his eye and runs outside leaving Kiera staring between the door and her curry which was bubbling away nicely. "My curry's not burning" she shouts after him shaking her head. "Really? I could have sworn I smelt burning, must have been the bugs in my eyes" he says as he walks back inside wearing a pair of sunglasses. "I'm not sure how bugs in your eyes affect your sense of smell but whatever. KIDS GET INSIDE AND GET DRESSED" she yells. "I'm going to take a shower before your friends get here, are you sure you're alright?" "Never better, Precious, never better," he tells her as the kids rush in and wrap themselves around his legs. Half an hour later, Sue arrives. Kiera had been looking forward to meeting her. She knew as soon as Sue joined in on tormenting her Uncle on Facebook that Sue was a person she wanted to meet, although she had no idea Sue would be that tall! "It's so nice to meet you finally," Sue says as she bends down to kiss Kiera on both cheeks. "And this fine looking young man must be Reece?" she smiles and pats his head then heads over to Giorgia who is stroking a small ginger cat. "I see you've

met Sprite, Giorgia?" Sue says as she gently strokes the purring cat. "What is it with cats and the name Sprite around here?" Reece asks exasperated, as Sprite gives him an all too familiar hiss. "Only one Sprite around these parts, pet. She wouldn't allow another to share her name; she's special" Sue tells him as she scratches Sprite under her chin. Before he can respond Graham shows up with his wife who Uncle Phill, still wearing sunglasses even though it's dark introduces to them all as 'The Current Mrs. M' which Kiera found odd because she knew her Uncle had recently sung at their 30th wedding anniversary. Between that and her Uncle's odd behaviour, her head was starting to hurt. Reece's too she thought by the way he was frowning at Sprite who hisses at him again, so he takes several steps back. As they all sat down to dinner, the conversation flowed. "I'm originally from Scotland you know" Graham informs Kiera in a British accent. "I can tell" Kiera deadpanned causing Uncle Phill to choke on his beer. Were his eyebrows that bushy this morning? Kiera stared, bemused. "Well if we didn't know before, we know who's niece you are now, smartypants," says Graham but Kiera barely hears him because she's staring at her Uncle who's looking increasingly nervous. "Uncle Phill, tell that story about the snail again?" Reece pleads "Snails, you say?" Graham asks "Did you know the current Mrs. M is a snail whisperer?" "She is not," Giorgia says laughing "there's no such thing." "She is indeed, young lady, and she's the best in the business aren't you Mrs. M?" Mrs. M nods enthusiastically. "I breed them too, forget horseracing, it's all about snail racing here, and my snails have never lost a race," She tells them excitedly. Before the kids can answer Uncle Phill starts to sneeze again, his sunglasses fall off exposing his eyes which are bloodshot and twitching like crazy. "I CAN'T STOP THE ITCHING ARRGGGHHH" he cries. He tears off his shirt runs down the stairs and divebombs into the freezing cold pool. Reece and Giorgia sit stunned as Kiera looks around the table, no one will make eye contact with her. "What's going on with him? He keeps saying he's fine, but he's not" "Did anybody else notice his eyebrows?" Reece pipes in "Not now, Reece or am I deducting another euro?" Kiera tells him. "I didn't say a word mum" Reece replies zipping his lips again. "Mum, should I go check on Uncle Phill?" Giorgia asks "I don't think that's a good idea pet," Sue tells her. "Why not? Keira asks, and Sue looks away. "You all obviously know something, why won't you tell me?" "It's not their place to tell you; Precious" Uncle Phill says as he comes back up the stairs wrapped in a towel. "Then you tell me" Kiera demands. "You're clearly not fine; you can't stop sneezing, your eyes look like a Vampires, you're covered in rashes and what's with the eyebrow thing you've got going on?" "I'm so sorry, Precious. I thought I would be OK, I've been taking double the recommended amount of Piriton, but it's not working, clearly" He tells her with his head bowed. "There's a reason you didn't see much of me growing up." "And why would that be?" He mumbles his reply. "I can't hear you." "I'm allergic to children," he cries and then bursts into tears. "I'm sorry, what?" Kiera says stunned "It's true, Precious. I came to Venterros to get the cure, but no one can get to it. This place is yours for the rest of your stay, but I won't be able to visit again. In another 24 hours, it will be irreversible, and I'll stay like this forever, it might already be too late." he says sadly. "But what about" The current Mrs. M begins but Uncle Phill interrupts "There is nothing that can be done, that's far too risky don't say another word." "Precious, Reece, Giorgia it's been my pleasure. I hope you enjoy this 'plaiice' for the remainder of your holiday." He grins sheepishly "Oh my God, fish puns,

at a moment like this, are you serious?" "Don't you mean Oh my Cod, Mum?" Reece snickers but stops immediately when she glares at him. "What's the cure Uncle Phill, we don't want to spend the rest of our holiday without you, let us help you," Giorgia pleads. "Forget the cure, Giorgia it's way too dangerous, I know this because I've tried and failed." Uncle Phill tells her miserably. "But together, we can do Any Fin, right Uncle Phill?" she says grinning, and he gives her a sad smile. "He needs to eat an olive, that will cure it" Mrs. M informs them and receives a glare from Uncle Phill. "Oh My Cod, are you serious?" Reece exclaims. "Yeah, in case you haven't noticed, which is quite possible given the length of Uncle Phill's eyebrows right now, we're surrounded by olive trees. Let me just put Sprite down, and I'll go pick him one" Giorgia says as she lowers a fluffy black cat down on the floor. "But that's not" The cat hisses before Reece can finish. "Jesus, I give up!" "Reece for the love of Cod, will you stop blaspheming" Kiera cries. "Oh my Cod, you said Cod," the kids fall about laughing as Kiera facepalms, then glares at Uncle Phill mumbling about fish puns and all his fault. "Aren't you supposed to be getting your Uncle an olive? Go make yourselves useful or lose a euro," Kiera snaps, fighting a grin. Clearing his throat, Graham tells them. "That won't work, Kiera." "Why not, you said he needed an olive, and your eyebrows haven't got the Uncle Phill thing going on, surely you can see we're surrounded by them?" Kiera says pointing towards all the olive tree's while staring at the length of her Uncle's eyebrows which were now almost reaching his nose. "Those are ordinary olives, he needs an olive from that tree up there" he points to the tallest mountain that's also covered in olive trees. "Well that narrows things down, is it the olive tree on the right or left?" Kiera deadpans "Not those tree's smartypants, look up, do you see that bright light at the top?" "That's a star," Reece says "With the man shape rock under it? Yeah, I see it too" Giorgia says. "How's that going to help Uncle Phill stop being allergic to us? I didn't know stars had olive tree's" she adds. "That's not a star, dear it's an olive tree, an exceptional olive tree that shines in the moonlight, the moonlight gives the olives healing capabilities that no other olive has," The current Mrs. M tells them. "Indeed" Graham agrees "an olive from that tree would cure your Uncle forever, but it's impossible to get one, only one person has ever made it there and back alive to my knowledge, isn't that right, Sue?" "That was a long time ago, Graham, but yes," Sue says, and she blushes, what's that all about Kiera wonders? "Why are you blushing, Sue?" Not the only one it would seem she thinks as Reece blurts out the question everyone else was too polite to ask, typical Reece. "So, Graham, you were telling us why it was impossible to get a magic moon olive" Kiera changes the subject receiving a grateful smile from Sue. "I wouldn't say impossible" Graham begins. "You definitely did" Reece pipes in "I specifically recall you were saying the word impossible, and so does Sprite" Giorgia adds as she strokes a Siamese cat on her lap. "WHAT THE mm-hmm" Kiera cuts Reece off with a hand over his mouth and mouths the word 'euro.' "If it were impossible then Sue wouldn't have successfully done it, would she?" Graham states matter of factly. "When I said it was impossible, I didn't mean it was completely impossible" He states again. "Impossible means something else in Scotland then?" Kiera deadpans, and Graham glares at Uncle Phill mumbling about smartypants nieces and it being all his fault. "What Graham means to say," says Mrs. M putting a soothing hand on his arm. "is that it's not impossible to get to the tree, it's just impossible to get passed the Giant...Unless you're Sue, that is, which makes it impossible for

anyone other than Sue, which means it's impossible." "OH, MY COD, did anyone even understand that? And what do you mean a Giant? Giants aren't real. Reece exclaims. The grey cat in Giorgia's lap hisses at his raised voice. "Sprite, will you stop hissing at me...WHAT THE mm-hmm" Kiera covers Reece's mouth again. "Finally you acknowledge who Sprite is, you know, maybe she'd stop hissing at you if you quit refusing to acknowledge who she is and just acknowledge it" Giorgia states and Sprite purrs. "Now you sound like The current Mrs. M, what's with that anyway? You two have been married like, forever mm-hmm." With her hand over his mouth, Kiera says "Reece, remember that talk we had about thinking before you speak?" He nods 'euro' she mouths "I was only going to say marriage must be different in Scotland," Uncle Phill gets another glare from Graham as he tries and fails to hide his grin. "So, Giants you say Mrs. M?" Kiera wisely changes the subject. "Yes, Giants are real, they're also rare, and you rarely see real ones these days," she states matter of factly. "I hate to agree with Reece, but Giants aren't real" Giorgia states back. "Young lady that rock you think resembles a man under a star is, in fact, a giant guarding the olive tree. Everyone in Venterros knows this" Graham tells her. "So, we just need to climb that mountain, get past a giant, pick an olive and we can cure Uncle Phill? What are we waiting for, let's go!" Giorgia says as she jumps to her feet, earning a growl from Sprite as she falls from her lap. "Sorry, Sprite" Giorgia coos giving her a stroke "I'm not even going to ask, why Sprite's now a Sphynx; I'll just say that I've seen her looking better," Reece says. Sprite growls and hisses at him, so he moves behind his mum. "It's hopeless," Uncle Phil says gloomily " Even if they left now and got past the Giant, I've got less than 24 hours before this is permanent, they'd never make it on time. It's best if I just leave now" He gets up to leave but Mrs. M stops him. "They could make it if they used the S-Car's," she tells him. "That's a splendid idea, the S-Car's would get them there and back in plenty of time as long as we don't feed them tonight," Graham replies enthusiastically. "What the heck are S-Cars and how the heck are we supposed to get past a Giant?" Reece asks. "S-Car's are Mrs. M's prize racing snails; they are the best of the best. If you want to get past the Giant, it's simple, take Sue" Graham replies. "I'm not sure I can get in and out of there safely anymore," Sue says sadly to Reece and Giorgia as they gaze pleadingly at her. "Why not," Giorgia asks. "It's complicated" Sue replies. "Please, Sue, won't you just try? We don't want Uncle Phill to have eyebrows that long forever, and we like spending time with him" Giorgia pleads. "OK, I'll go with you, but I can't promise anything" Sue replies. "Well, if you're all hell-bent on doing this then I'm coming with you" Uncle Phill declares. "If your hell bent on coming with us, you'd need to do something about your eyebrows," Reece replies "Ooooh, can I platt them, Uncle Phill?" Giorgia asks excitedly. "That's a good idea, pet but it's probably best if I do it, he's allergic to you, remember," Sue tells her. "Oh, yeah" Giorgia replies gloomily "But not for much longer, once we get the olive for him he'll be completely cured" she adds excitedly. "Guys, you don't have to do this, you can just come back when you're grown up, and I won't be allergic to you anymore," Uncle Phill replies. "Absolutely not," Giorgia says stubbornly. "we want to spend time with you now while we're young and think you're funny. We want to laugh with you, not at you as Mum does." "What do you mean she laughs at me?" Uncle Phill says aghast. Kiera smiles at him like butter wouldn't melt and flutters her lashes. "So Graham, S-Car's huh? As in S-Car-Go, I assume?" Kiera asks. "You assume

correctly, I imported them from Scotland for Mrs. M to breed and she's done a marvellous job, you won't find any faster, I thought the name quite fitting." "By naming your Scottish snails after a French delicacy? Yeah, it all makes sense now" Reece deadpans. " What do you feed them anyway and why does not feeding them tonight make them faster?" "Young British boy's" Graham deadpans back " And not feeding them tonight makes them extra hungry, you'll see tomorrow. Let's all get a good nights sleep and meet up at my house at dawn." He grins evilly at Reece as he and Mrs. M jump in their Smart car and head home. "I can't believe he willingly drives a Smart car," Kiera says to Uncle Phill. "I know, I'm embarrassed for him, Precious. Now, are you sure I can't talk you guys out of this, it's too risky, it doesn't feel right? I can't ask you to do this." "Oh my Cod, Uncle Phill" Kiera responds and they all laugh. "You're not asking us anything, and we're doing this. You can't spend the rest of your life allergic to kids, or with those eyebrows. I'm more scared of them than a Giant." "She makes an excellent point, Phill" Sue laughs. "Let's get you away from these beautiful children before they get any longer; they're almost down to your chin now as it is. Kiera, we'll pick you up before dawn, you all go and get a good nights sleep now." "Goodnight, kids, Goodnight, Precious" Uncle Phill calls back as he gets into Sue's car and heads home. Kiera's last thought as she drifts off to sleep later that night. Is how on Earth is it even possible for a person to be allergic to kids?

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